

NEYM Ministry & Eldership Resource Group Annual Report 2026

The primary work of this group is to nurture the culture and practice of recognizing and upholding ministry among Friends in New England, and of acknowledging and sustaining Friends' tradition of supportive elders. According to *Faith and Practice*, care and accountability of ministers is rooted in the local monthly meeting, with additional responsibility and support held by the Ministry & Counsel of quarterly meetings. The role of the yearly meeting, and specifically of the Ministry and Eldership Resource Group, is to support monthly meetings and quarters in these vital responsibilities. [PB Minute 2024-102]

The Ministry & Eldership resource group was approved at Sessions 2024; the first members were appointed at Sessions 2025. We are available to nurture, inspire and offer support; to share wisdom that is not evenly shared and understood; to affirm there is a tradition and to help people find access to it through trust and relationship.

Our first year has been spent seeking to become aware of the conditions in the yearly meeting. In February, we wrote a letter of introduction to all monthly and quarterly meetings, including queries. We have engaged with four meetings, and we look forward to more inquiries.

We offered workshops lifting up emerging conversations around ministry and eldership in the fall at Meeting Care Day, and the spring at the Living Faith Gathering and Quarterly Meeting Visioning Day. These were widely attended by Friends concerned with strengthening understanding and practices around ministry and eldership in their meetings, as by individuals feeling calls to ministry.

We are specifically asked to “report annually on the group’s sense of some of the growing edges of ministry and eldership within the yearly meeting.”

We see and have heard

- Curiosity and expanding understanding concerning ministry and eldership in our meetings. Interest in how to respond to someone experiencing a call to ministry, when this is something unfamiliar to the meeting.
- Without shared clarity, Friends from different meetings experience widely different support, with gifts sometimes going unnoticed and unnurtured.
- Friends are struggling to hold conversations about gifts of ministry and eldership, when some in the meeting are eager while others resist.
- Concerns to nurture Spirit-led vocal ministry in meeting for worship.
- Interest in meetings for conversations about healthy eldership.
- Small but growing numbers of individuals with sustained calls to Gospel ministry (ministry that draws people deeper into the Divine life: transformational, encouraging, instructing, nudging, and sometimes admonishing) are receiving support from their meetings, while others are not.
- Meetings are recognizing and finding ways to support individuals with calls to public ministry outside of the meeting, including direct service, social witness, and outreach ministries.
- It is a true joy to exercise one’s gifts!

Friends in the past took seriously that spiritual gifts are poured out on the meeting community, not just the individual. Having a call to ministry was part of the normal metabolism of the meeting community. The Ministry & Eldership Resource Group is seeking to re-enliven a culture where Quaker ministry and eldership thrive.

Members: Brian Drayton (Wellesley/Salem), Jennie Isbell Shinn (Mt Toby/Connecticut Valley), Jim Lyons (Mt Toby/Connecticut Valley), William Monroe (Providence/Southeast)

Ex-officio: Janet Hough, NEYM M&C clerk (Cobscook/Vassalboro), Sarah Gant, Accompaniment clerk (Beacon Hill/Salem), Noah Bishop Merrill, NEYM Secretary (Putney/Northwest)

Emeritus member: Carl Williams (Plainfield/Northwest)